

## SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

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Tuesday, February 2, 2016, 6:00 p.m, Old Schoolhouse Common

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Present: Selectboard members Chris Martin and Andy Perchlik; Town Clerk Bobbi Brimblecombe; Firefighters Tim Morris and Tim Maclay; School Board Chair Patrick Healy and Business Manager Christina Kimball; Visitors Wilmer Brandt, David Warshow, Diana Batzel, Lois and Welston Burnham, James Arisman, Janet Nielsen, Jenny Warshow, Will Schwarz, Peggy Bresee, Winnie Valenza, Rich Phillips

At 6:00 p.m. the meeting was called to order by Chair Andrew Perchlik

**Fire Department:** Tim Maclay and Tim Morris addressed the Selectboard to explain that they would like to insulate the Fire Station attic, for a cost of about \$8,500. The attic has some insulation but not enough to be efficient. The money will come from the capital fund, and will likely pay for itself in reduced heating costs. The Selectboard approved.

**School Budget:** Patrick Healy and Christina Kimball came to explain the challenges that are being presented as a result of Act 46. The law assesses a penalty if a school district spends more than a certain dollar amount per equalized pupil. The legislature is continuing to make changes to the education funding law, but as of today, the spending level that will trigger a penalty amounts to an increase of 2.55% per equalized pupil. The School Board is proposing a budget with a 3.82% increase in spending. Equalized pupils are down by 9 students but that is spread over all of the grades. To avoid the penalty, the Board would have had to cut 5 positions. They are reducing staff by one paraeducator and an English language learner teacher. Patrick noted that the Times Argus erroneously reported that the school is adding a person. They are adding a staff member to provide services that they were paying for as an outside service, so they are saving money. Because of the change in Marshfield's common level of appraisal, the tax rate will go down a penny; it would have gone down 3 cents if it wasn't for the penalty. Christina noted that one of the budget challenges is the unfunded mandate of universal preschool. Now that the school is required to offer preschool, they can no longer use federal funds to pay for it. The school is taking part in a study to look at options for combining school districts with neighboring towns; different options are being looked at.

February 23<sup>rd</sup> is the informational meeting and the annual meeting. The budget will be voted on Town Meeting Day.

**Stranahan Town Forest:** Andy apologized for not sending the committee the letter that was mentioned in the minutes. He explained that the Board's decision was to restructure the committee and redefine the roles, and ask people to reapply. James asked what the problem was. Andy explained that he didn't think the committee was able to make important decisions. James asked if the decision was personality-based. Chris and Andy said that wasn't it. Andy said that committee members may be representing their interest group, rather than the public interest at large, because that's what the management plan instructed. He sees this as a time when new

people can get on the board and people can get off the board without feeling like they are quitting.

Diana was taken aback by the minutes because she felt like the committee came to the Board for help and they came to an agreement. James feels like the Selectboard should have discussed this at the Stranahan meeting, before everyone left. Diana noted that the only person on the petition who ever came to a meeting was Sarah Fowler. None of the other people on the petition ever came to a meeting. Chris stated that the petition was not really discussed at the meeting.

Diana feels like the committee did a good job following the management plan except for the logging. Andy explained that the Board had meant to thank the committee for their work, because much has been done, but individual committee members have stated that the committee is dysfunctional. James asked if the current members would be on the new committee if they applied. Andy stated that they would be welcome to apply. Chris stated that this isn't something that just happened – it has been going on for years. Andy said he feels that the disagreements around logging have caused enough acrimony to make the rest of the committee's work difficult. Rich Phillips feels that if the Board wanted to restructure the committee, they should have discussed it with the committee and listened to their feedback. He feels that logging was moving along and there was a defined process to follow. James Arisman stated that the committee had a process but three members of the committee did not follow the process. Bobbi stated that the second step in the committee's process was to get approval from the Selectboard. Winnie Valenza asked whether three members was a quorum. (yes) James asked whether there was something at the Stranahan meeting that made the Board decide not to allow the committee to continue. Andy explained that each Selectboard member did not know how the other members felt until they discussed it with each other, since they did not discuss it outside the meeting.

Wilmer noted that the decision to log was 3 to 2, but not cutting is also a decision. He thinks the committee needs to talk it over and make a decision. David Warshow stated that the decision to log would have an impact for 20 to 40 years. James Arisman stated that the Town would be at risk of violation if wetlands are not protected. Chris stated that ANR and a responsible logger could come up with safe methods for logging, with the exception of the areas that have already been identified as off limits to logging. Rich Phillips feels that the issue is never going to be resolved until the parcels are looked at and a list is developed of what parcels may or may not be logged. Wilmer stated that there will always be different opinions, but as long as there is a good forester to supervise the job, logging is something to be considered. He noted that the federal government does have some land that is untouched, and some landowners who can afford to may leave their land untouched if they don't need the income.

Bobbi presented the Board with a letter from Anne Reed and another letter that was left in the town drop box.

Chris and Andy reviewed Laurie's draft changes to the Management Plan. Andy asked to strike "representing various interest groups" and change it to "represent the interests of the town." The

board discussed possibly having more members. Andy also stated that the management plan might be reviewed every year, and a larger re-write could be done every five years. Language from the Town Report designated fund policy should be incorporated into the plan. David suggested that the plan should have a provision that a public hearing could be requested by a small number of committee members if they feel that it is necessary. Diana suggested that the committee should have bylaws or rules of procedure. Bobbi suggested changing the information about the minutes, etc. to say that the committee would follow the open meeting law. Andy suggested 7 members. James asked if he could get a copy of the draft when it is revised. Bobbi said she would post a draft on the website for people to review. Andy suggested that citizens could submit suggested changes. He suggested that the plan should uniformly refer to the property as the Stranahan Forest rather than "Town Forest".

Andy will incorporate the comments into another draft. He will have the draft ready for the next meeting. Anyone with comments at this point in the process should send them to Bobbi ([clerk@town.marshfield.vt.us](mailto:clerk@town.marshfield.vt.us)) and to the Assistant Town Clerk, Winnie Valenza ([assist@town.marshfield.vt.us](mailto:assist@town.marshfield.vt.us)), and they will be forwarded to Andy. Jenny asked whether the committee should still meet on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Andy suggested that the committee could meet if they want to, to discuss the management plan and/or the logging proposal that Jenny and Ed are working on.

The question was raised about the minutes of the last meeting, and if the minutes should be changed to clarify that Board's decision regarding logging. The Board stated again that they told Ed not to mark the trees, and they did make a word change to the draft minutes before approving them. Jenny read the proposal again from the Stranahan Committee, where the suggestion was to begin marking several more stands for logging. She is afraid that the Board could now move ahead with logging. Chris stated that this is the problem with the committee. Andy stated that the Board could decide now to do logging, regardless of what past minutes say. The Board stated that it doesn't make sense to argue over semantics regarding what the minutes say, because they feel that the minutes are OK as it.

**Hollister Hill Apartments:** Bobbi read a letter from Jeffrey Kantor regarding the proposed redevelopment of the Hollister Hill Apartments. It's possible that they might ask the town to apply for a community development block grant in the future.

**Central Vermont Humane Society:** The Town received a draft contract from CVHS but the contract includes dog provisions that do not comply with the town ordinance. Bobbi will ask them to redraft the contract.

**Rutland Resolution:** The Board reviewed the resolution; they decided not to pursue it.

**Speed Cart:** Chris explained that several years ago, the Towns of Calais, Marshfield and Plainfield got a speed cart to share through a state program. We used it briefly but it wasn't very effective. It needs work. Calais is willing to fix it if we sign over ownership to them. The Board agreed to sign it over to them.

**Personnel:** Guthrie Perry asked for permission to take leave during February for the birth of his child. The personnel policy states that the road crew may not take leave in the winter without the Selectboard's permission. The Board approved, as long as the Road Foreman will fill in for him.

**Old Schoolhouse Common:** The Board approved the purchase of a chair cart for the Old Schoolhouse Common.

**Check Policy:** Andy moved that the policy for stopping payment of checks: if someone didn't get the check, we will issue a new check if they are willing to pay the \$30 stop payment fee. Chris seconded – all in favor.

**Resignation:** The Board received a letter of resignation from Tony Mayhew, after 10 years of service on the Conservation Commission. The Board expressed their thanks for his service.

**Grand List:** Bobbi updated the Board on the delays that the current use easy out program has caused. Because the State Tax Department was so overwhelmed with 2015 applications, they did not get them all processed and sent to the Town before the end of the year. The Board approved the request for an extension to file the final grand list.

**Roads:** The Board approved the Certificate of Highway Miles with no changes to last year's mileage.

**Vermont State Police:** The Board discussed the report of their activities for January.

**Expenses, Permits & Payroll:** Selectboard members read and signed reports for General Expenses and Payroll. They approved a liquor license for Rainbow Sweets.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bobbi Brimblecombe, Town Clerk

The foregoing is a true copy of the Minutes of the February 2, 2016 Selectboard Meeting.  
A True Record. Attest, \_\_\_\_\_, Town Clerk

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